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Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 HA-05 AID-05
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 /109 W
----------064147 261514Z /42
P 261336Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1085
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI
AMCONSUL BUKAVU POUCH
AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE POUCH
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 8111

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SHUM, CG
SUBJECT: ZAIRIAN REACTION TO RELEASE OF NQUZA

REF A) KINSHASA 7295; B) KINSHASA 7367; C) LUBUMBASHI 0847 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE AMNESTY OF FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER NGUZA KARL I BOND (REF A) AND HIS SUBSEQUENT RELEASE (REF B) HAS BEEN GREETED BY GENERAL INDIFFERENCE IN KINSHASA BUT WITH SOME ENTHUSIASM IN HIS HOME AREA OF LUBUMBASHI. WHILE HE HAS YET TO CIRCULATE IN PUBLIC, ONE SOURCE CLAIMS TO HAVE TALKED WITH HIM AND FOUND HIM IN GOOD HEALTH. END SUMMARY.

2. THE AMNESTY PROMULGATED 12 JULY (REF A) WHICH PARDONED FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER AND FIRST VICE PRESIDENT NGUZA KARL I BOND AND THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS RELEASE ON JULY 14 HAVE NOT GENERATED MUCH
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ATTENTION IN KINSHASA. IN THE CAPITAL, EMBASSY OFFICERS HAVE FOUND AN ALMOST UNIVERSAL "HO HUM" OR "OH THAT" REACTION AMONG CONTACTS. YET, IN LUBUMBASHI THE CONSULATE REPORTS THAT NGUZA'S RELEASE HAS BEEN RECEIVED WITH ENTHUSIASM.

3. IN KINSHASA, MOST COMMENTS ON THE CASE TEND TOWARD ROUTINE DISPARAGEMENT OF MOBUTU'S SINCERITY AND SKEPTICAL QUERIES ABOUT

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NGUZA'S CURRENT WHEREABOUTS. THE GENERAL APATHY MAY STEM LARGELY FROM NGUZA'S SHALLOW BASE OF POPULARITY. HIS PRESTIGE PROBABLY WAS GREATER AMONG HIS PEERS IN WESTERN CAPITALS THAN WITH HIS COMPATRIOTS. IT IS TRUE THAT HIS COURAGEOUS SELF-DEFENSE DURING HIS TRIAL GIAVE HIS LOCAL IMAGE A NOTABLE BOOST. HOWEVER, A YEAR AFTER HIS TRIAL AND IMPRISONMENT, THAT ESTEEM SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN EPHEMERAL.

4. IN CONTRAST, THE INITIAL LUBUMBASHI REACTION TO NGUZA'S RELEASE HAS BEEN POSITIVE, ESPECIALLY SINCE MANY THERE HAD BELIEVED EARLIER RUMORS THAT NGUZA WAS DEAD. THE LUNDA COMMUNITY, WHICH DID NOT FEEL NGUZA HAD SERVED ITS INTERESTS WHILE HE WAS ALLIED WITH MOBUTU IN THE GOVERNMENT, NOW SEEMS TO HOLD HIM IN HIGHER REGARD DUE TO HIS IMPRISONMENT. TO SOME IN LUBUMBASHI, NGUZA NOW REPRESENTS AN ABLE NATIVE SON, WHO THEY HOPE WILL RETURN TO PUBLIC LIFE.

5. CONSULATE LUBUMBASHI ADDS THAT ENTHUSIASM OVER NGUZA'S RELEASE DOES NOT TRANSLATE INTO SUPPORT FOR MOBUTU. SEVERAL INDIVIDUALS HAVE TOLD OUR CONSUL THAT NOTHING MOBUTU MIGHT DO COULD WIN THE SUPPORT OF THEIR COMMUNITIES. RECALLING PREVIOUS AMNESTIES THAT WERE SUBSEQUENTLY FORGOTTEN AND THE RETURNEES REARRESTED, THEY WONDER WHAT GUARANTEE EXISTS THAT MOBUTU WILL NOT REARREST NGUZA AND/OR SOME OF THE OTHERS AFTER THEIR RELEASE HAS SERVED ITS PURPOSE.

6. THUS FAR MUCH OF THE NEWS ABOUT NGUZA'S HEALTH OR STATUS HAS CONFIDENTIAL

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COME FROM HIGH ZAIRIAN OFFICIALS. WITH ONE KNOWN EXCEPTION, FAMILY AND FRIENDS APPEAR TO BE IN THE DARK. INFORMATION MINISTER MOKOLO'S REMARK ABOUT MEDICAL TREATMENT (REF B) COUPLED WITH PRESS REPORTS ABOUT THE HIGH COST ($1,800/MONTH) OF NGUZA'S PRISON CARE COULD BE CONSTRUED TO MEAN THAT NGUZA'S HEALTH IS IMPAIRED. ON THE OTHER HAND, A KINSHASA SOURCE CLAIMS TO HAVE SEEN AND TALKED WITH A CLEARLY HEALTHY NGUZA. ACCORDING TO HIM, NGUZA IS IN KINSHASA, STAYING IN THE HOME OF A EUROPEAN WHILE HOPING TO SEE THE PRESIDENT TO CLEAR UP QUESTIONS ABOUT HIS FUTURE.

7. AS TO NGUZA'S POLITICAL STATUS, THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR WAS RECENTLY REMINDED BY ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER IDZUMBUIR THAT THE AMNESTY HAD ONLY FREED CIVILIAN PRISONERS, DID NOT RESTORE THEIR POLITICAL RIGHTS, AND THAT A SEPARATE ORDINANCE WOULD BE REQUIRED BEFORE SUCH RIGHTS COULD BE RESTORED. IDZUMBUIR LEFT THE IMPRESSION THAT SUCH AN ORDINANCE WOULD BE FORTHCOMING.

8. COMMENT: WE DO NOT FIND IT SURPRISING THAT NGUZA IS MAINTAINING A LOW PROFILE. THIS WOULD SEEM TO BE THE BETTER PART OF WISDOM IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, AND WE WOULD EXPECT LOCAL SECURITY SERVICES TO BE KEEPING A CLOSE EYE ON HIS ACTIVITIES AT LEAST DURING THE PERIOD IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING HIS RELEASE. FOR THE TIME BEING, WE

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DO NOT CONSIDER CONTACTS WITH THIS OR OTHER DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS TO
BE IN NGUZA'S BEST INTEREST, AND WE THEREFORE DO NOT INTEND TO INITIATE

THEM. THERE ARE NO PRESENT INDICATIONS THAT NGUZA WILL RESUME AN
ACTIVE ROLE IN THE GOVERNMENT. ON THE OTHER HAND, ZAIRE'S
POLITICAL HISTORY IS FULL OF PROMINENT PERSONALITIES WHO HAVE MET
THEIR DOWNFALL AT MOBUTU'S HANDS, ONLY TO REAPPEAR IN ONE
CAPACITY OR ANOTHER. GENERALLY, HOWEVER, THE PROCESS OF REHABILITA-
TION TAKES QUITE AWHILE.
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